

I understand that in China, the people's access is limited by Government. What's the difference if our own FCC allows monopolies to dictate what channels will be available to us, and how much we must pay for it. We've seen nothing but huge increases as corporations get more and more control over the market.

And there's always the possibility that our own Government or one or two owners will eventually be able to dictate to the few cable companies left as to what we can see on TV, and what we have access to over the internet. I think it has already happened with the big newspapers, and it sure looks like Government is now going to hold sway over PBS and NPR.

As a consumer,  
(whoever's reading  
this), don't you  
ever click through  
the great number of  
channels, and think,  
"There's nothing  
good on TV." So,  
why can't we pick  
and choose from  
among all the  
channels and let  
market forces work?

Because the larger  
the cable companies  
get, the more they  
can limit us to  
accept pre-packaged  
channel bundles.

Monopolies used to  
be illegal. So,  
what's wrong with  
you guys? Who's  
getting rich here?  
I sometimes wonder  
what would happen if  
China made a big  
enough offer, how  
quickly our laws  
would be changed so  
we could make the  
deal to sell our  
media. And I just  
don't see the  
difference between  
that extreme and one  
or two companies  
owning everything.

Giant cable companies should not be permitted to grow larger. Further consolidation in the cable industry is a clear violation of horizontal ownership rules that must be re-established to serve the public interest.

The concentration of power and control over distribution of media is a growing problem in this country. Though we have more channels available than ever before, they are under the operation of a handful of giant corporations.

If Comcast and Time Warner are allowed to merge with Adelphia, the two companies will control nearly 50 percent of the national market. This level of concentration in the cable industry will

lead to higher consumer rates and lower quality service.

Since passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the “deregulation” of cable, consumers have seen their rates jump an average of 59 percent — with some areas experiencing even more dramatic increases.

We are required to buy channels we don’t want or need because the cable operators bundle them together. The quality of customer service often reflects the fact that cable television is not a competitive market.

Meanwhile, the cost of cable modem service remains out of reach for many households, holding constant for years and selectively underserving rural

and low-income Americans. The American people are watching the digital divide widen even as the need for access to high-speed networks increases.

Cable companies have become less responsive to the needs and requirements of communities. The quality of public accountability in local franchise agreements has declined, as big companies leverage their power to squeeze local governments.

In many communities, the truly independent sources of local news, information and culture come from the public channels produced at the local access centers.

Unfortunately, local channels lack the resources to produce the programming that

citizens want and need.

The last thing we need is to reward the anti-competitive actions of cable giants by permitting greater consolidation in ownership, reducing competition, and encouraging more of the same.